

Heart of the Neighborhood



Above: A view towards Downtown San Antonio from the Inspiration Hills Neighborhood.

The community offers a delightful blend of architectural styles built over a 50 year period. Breathtaking city views can be found in Inspiration Hills' ranch style homes while fabulous Spanish Mediterranean homes grace the older neighborhoods.

-Joan Brogley, Monticello Park Neighborhood

Introduction

The Near Northwest Community is composed of traditional neighborhoods with streets primarily laid out on a grid, garages facing alleys or set back on the lot in several areas, street trees and variety in housing types and design. Portions of the planning area have been designated as historic districts and other areas have the potential to become conservation districts. The Deco District on Fredericksburg Road serves as a significant economic and social hub in the community. The community supports the continued revitalization of all of the commercial corridors.

This chapter of the Near Northwest Community Plan focuses on the community's goals, objectives and action steps for developing, revitalizing and improving the appearance of the area's business corridors, increasing the number of residents shopping locally, encouraging the maintenance, rehabilitation and restoration of the area's housing, protecting community character and promoting the area as a great place to live, work and play.

Near Northwest Community Plan



A new neighborhood business in the Deco District



Woodlawn Theater

Goal 2 - Economic Development

Ensure the Near NW Community's business corridors are filled with a mix of uses including professional offices, residences and busy shops, providing neighbors an attractive place to walk for shopping, playing, working and relaxing both day and night.

Objective 2.1: Deco District

Continue to develop the Deco District (see page 35 for a map of the district area) as a pedestrian friendly business corridor offering a mix of businesses and residences to meet the community's needs.

Action Steps:

2.1.1 Conduct an inventory of existing businesses and available property on Fredericksburg Road.

2.1.2 Examine the existing zoning classifications on Fredericksburg Road.

- *Identify any areas where rezoning would be preferable, including areas where a mix of commercial development and housing could be promoted.*
- *Encourage property owners to rezone their properties.*
- *Potentially identify funding sources for rezoning costs as an incentive to property owners.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC

Partnerships: CoSA Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) Program, San Antonio area Chambers of Commerce, Area college business depts.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC

Partnerships: CoSA NCR Program and Development Services Dept., San Antonio area Chambers of Commerce, Area college business depts.

Funding Sources: Grants

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- 2.1.3** Research available business incentives such as tax abatements and tax increment financing (TIF) to attract private investment.

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC

Partners: CoSA NCR Program and Economic Development Dept., Area college business depts., Area banks

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

- 2.1.4** Promote Operation Facelift as a way to enhance business appearances.

- *Operation Facelift funds exterior façade improvement projects for commercial buildings located within neighborhood commercial revitalization (NCR) areas.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC

Partners: CoSA NCR Program

Funding Sources: CoSA NCR Program

- 2.1.5** Investigate a Neighborhood Conservation District for the Deco District area.

- *A Neighborhood Conservation District is an overlay zoning district that contains design guidelines for new development. Property owners, together with Planning Department staff, develop the design guidelines. These guidelines can address building height, size, massing, signage, building orientation, sidewalk location, etc.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC

Partners: CoSA Planning Dept. and NCR Program

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

- 2.1.6** Continue to plan for and pursue additional pedestrian and street enhancements such as landscaping and street furniture for the entire Fredericksburg Road corridor, building on the strength of the existing enhancements.

- *Incorporate canopy trees in addition to palm trees to provide shade, reduce temperatures and remove air pollutants.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC, New Merchant Assn(s) (if formed for the area beyond that covered by the CDC – see Action Step 2.2.1)

Partners: CoSA NCR Program, Planning and Public Works Depts.

Funding Sources: CoSA, Neighborhood Improvement Challenge Program (NICP), Business and property owners

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Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC, CoSA NCR Program, Planning, Parks & Recreation and Public Works Depts., SAWS, CPS, SW Bell

Funding Sources: CoSA, NICP, Business and property owners

- 2.1.7** Enhance the pocket parks located along Fredericksburg Road as gathering spaces for customers and residents.



Fredericksburg Road pocket park

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA NCR Program, Neighborhood Action (Target Sweeps) and Police Depts., AIA, Mental health outreach programs

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

- 2.1.8** Investigate options for addressing the loitering and vagrancy problems that occur in Fredericksburg Road area near IH-10.

Timeline: Long (6 or more years)

Lead Partner: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC

Partnerships: CoSA NCR Program

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

- 2.1.9** Conduct a parking study in the Fredericksburg Road corridor. Determine if additional parking is needed to serve the desired businesses.



Storefront parking

Objective 2.2: Business Development

Create opportunities for new business development to ensure a diversity of attractive businesses in pedestrian friendly environments.



Bandera Road restaurant

Action Steps:

2.2.1 Encourage business and property owners along Bandera Road, the northern end of Fredericksburg Road (beyond the Deco District), West Avenue, Culebra Road, Hildebrand Avenue, Zarzamora, Cincinnati, Babcock, Saint Cloud and in the Jefferson Village area to organize and form new merchants associations for the purpose of supporting and initiating improvement efforts.

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA NCR Program, Business and property owners

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

2.2.2 Encourage new business development to locate in existing commercial areas in need of revitalization and promote existing business enhancement.

- *Encourage a mix of uses within the commercial areas including business and residential development. (see page 42 for the Land Use Plan)*
- *Establish public-private partnerships and investigate grant programs to help fund pedestrian and storefront improvements.*
- *Develop design guidelines and promote incentives to encourage good commercial building design.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: New Merchant Assn(s)

Partnerships: Near NW Coalition, San Antonio Conservation Society, San Antonio area Chambers of Commerce, CoSA NCR Program and Economic Development Dept.

Funding Sources: Grants, State or City funding

2.2.3 Monitor existing bars so when alcohol licenses come up for renewal, area property owners, who will be notified of the need for renewal due to new legislation that took effect September 1, 2001, have the information needed to either support or recommend against license renewal.

- *Work with property owners to initiate zoning changes to avoid bars where necessary.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: NAs, Property and business owners, CoSA, TxABC

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Near Northwest Community Plan

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: NAs, Property and business owners, CoSA Code Compliance Dept.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

2.2.4 Discourage certain businesses from locating within the planning area including day labor sites, pawn shops, tattoo parlors, dollar-type stores, used car sales and additional auto-repair stores.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Property and business owners, CoSA

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

2.2.5 Identify priority locations to investigate whether a business has the appropriate zoning.

- *Work with the CoSA Code Compliance Department to address priority concerns.*



A Bandera Road restaurant

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Jefferson – Woodlawn Lake CDC, CoSA NCR Program and Code Compliance Dept., NAs, Business and property owners

Funding Sources: Grants

Objective 2.3: Business Appearance

Improve the appearance of area commercial corridors.

Action Steps:

2.3.1 Develop incentives to encourage better business maintenance including efforts to address graffiti and general cleanliness.

- *Report priority concerns to the CoSA Code Compliance Department.*

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2.3.2 Reduce the amount of signage pollution along major arterials.

- *Work with the CoSA Development Services Department to improve enforcement of existing sign ordinances.*
- *Potentially develop signage guidelines to promote consistency and improved appearance.*
- *In the long-term, work to strengthen the City's signage ordinances.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Development Services and Neighborhood Action (Target Sweeps) Depts., AIA, City Officials

Funding Sources: Fundraisers, Property owners

2.3.3 Encourage the planting of street trees along area commercial corridors.

- *Utilize drought tolerant, natives species wherever feasible.*



Street Trees in the Deco District

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: : CoSA Planning Dept., Property owners, Environmental groups, City Officials

Funding Sources: NICP

2.3.4 Apply to the CoSA Public Works Department to request the burying of utility lines or relocation to alleys as part of street improvement projects in the planning area's commercial corridors. (also see Action Step 5.5.3)

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: CoSA

2.3.5 Encourage businesses to post clearly visible address numbers.



Business address example

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Business and property owners, CoSA Code Compliance, Fire and Police Depts.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Near Northwest Community Plan



Pedestrians at a local business

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Churches, Local businesses

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: NAs, Local businesses, Jefferson-Woodlawn Lake CDC

Funding Sources: Minimal cost



Planning area apartments

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: HUD, SAHA, CoSA Neighborhood Action Dept., Nonprofit housing providers

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Objective 2.4: Business Support

Instigate community efforts to support area business assets.

Action Steps:

2.4.1 Establish a regular forum for churches and businesses to address community needs and create partnerships.

2.4.2 Encourage all residents to shop at local and family-run businesses located within the Near NW rather than traveling outside of the planning area.

- *Possibly create a frequent shopper card for the Deco District.*
- *Shoppers with a completely punched card could enter in a monthly drawing for cash or merchandise.*

Goal 3 - Housing

Preserve and revitalize the community's unique mix of quality housing.

Objective 3.1: Rental Housing

Provide well-maintained housing for a mix of incomes.

Action Steps:

3.1.1 Work with the City, housing agencies and other housing providers to establish a policy that sets a maximum of 20% of the units in a multi-family complex can be made available to low-income residents.

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3.1.2 Encourage some landlords to enhance their property management skills.

- *Potentially offer workshops on leasing, property maintenance, etc.*
- *Promote the potential for selling their single-family properties to new homeowners.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: UT Economic Development Center, Realtors, Property owners

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Objective 3.2: Home Improvement and Maintenance

Encourage investment in housing improvement and maintenance.

Action Steps:

3.2.1 Approach Habitat for Humanity about the viability and logistics for a day build program for elderly and low-income homeowners.



Neighborhood housing

3.2.2 Locate _____ or develop an educational brochure on housing maintenance and repair programs available for elderly or low-income homeowners.

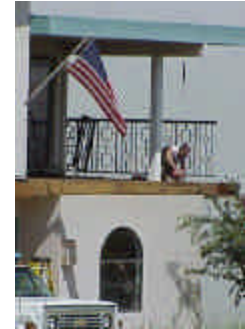
- *Also include information on common housing related scams.*
- *Target distribution of the brochure to the housing most in need of assistance.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA, NAs, Churches, Businesses, Schools, Habitat for Humanity, Nonprofit housing providers

Funding Sources: Minimal cost



Home improvement effort

Near Northwest Community Plan

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Area repairpersons, Hardware stores, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, CoSA Code Compliance Dept. and Arborist's Office

Funding Sources: Hardware stores

3.2.3 Organize and hold workshops for area residents on home maintenance, landscaping and code compliance.

- *Work to recruit significant participation from the Los Angeles Heights neighborhood and the area bound by Zarzamora, Woodlawn, IH-10 and Culebra.*
- *Potentially offer home improvement gift certificates as door prizes to encourage attendance.*
- *Educate participants about xeriscape landscaping, water conservation and lawn chemicals as a source of nonpoint pollution.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: NAs, Area businesses

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

3.2.4 Hold a housing beautification contest several times a year. Place a display sign in the winner's yard.



Neighborhood house

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Housing & Community Development and Neighborhood Action Depts., Banks, Credit Unions

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

3.2.5 Identify government programs and financial institutions that can offer loans and assistance with revitalization.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Repairpersons used by NA members, Realtors, CoSA Neighborhood Action Dept. (Target Sweeps)

Funding Sources: Co-op members,

3.2.6 Develop a co-op for home maintenance, targeting elderly and low-income families. Use the economic force of numbers to purchase home maintenance supplies and services.

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- 3.2.7** Study the impact of tax increases for persons living on a limited income.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: CoSA

Partnerships: Near NW Coalition, Jefferson CoOp

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

- 3.2.8** Encourage homeowners to post clearly visible address numbers.



House number example

courage homeowners to post clearly visible address numbers.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Homeowners, NAs, CoSA Code Compliance, Fire and Police Depts.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Objective 3.3: Design Standards

Protect and preserve the Near Northwest's unique housing character.

Action Steps:

- 3.3.1** Identify architects and builders who can remodel or rehabilitate homes in a sensitive manner that maintains the houses' character.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Planning Dept., Better Business Bureau, AIA, San Antonio Conservation Society

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

- 3.3.2** Investigate the design of individual historic landmarks or historic districts within the planning area.



Fulton Street Historic District

Investigate the design of individual historic landmarks or historic districts within the planning area.

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Planning Dept., San Antonio Conservation Society

Funding Sources: Minimal cost



Neighborhood house

Near Northwest Community Plan

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Planning Dept.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost



Example of higher density housing

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Realtors, Developers

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Solar San Antonio, SAWS, CPS, Environmental groups

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

3.3.3 Investigate Neighborhood Conservation Districts as a way to protect the architectural character of the neighborhood.

- *A Neighborhood Conservation District is an overlay zoning district that contains design guidelines for new development. Property owners, together with Planning Department staff, develop the design guidelines. These guidelines can address building height, size, massing signage, building orientation, sidewalk location, etc.*

Objective 3.4: Housing Development

Encourage new housing development that is compatible with the community's character.

Action Steps:

3.4.1 Promote development sites available for a mix of housing types.

- *Encourage higher density residential development in certain locations to help create the population to support public transportation, increase pedestrian traffic and shop at area businesses.*
- *Identify potential sites to develop housing for seniors and the disabled.*
- *Encourage new developments to reflect the character of the surrounding areas including the provision of alleys.*

3.4.2 Educate residents about and encourage the usage of alternative forms of energy and green design standards, including learning where to plant trees in order to reduce energy bills.

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- 3.4.3** Create a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that is charged with developing and rehabilitating housing in the Near NW.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Nonprofit housing providers, CoSA Neighborhood Action and Housing & Community Development Depts.

Funding Sources: CoSA, grants

Objective 3.5: Community Promotion

Promote the strengths of the Near NW Community as a place to live, work and play.

Action Steps:

- 3.5.1** Use the media (TV, news, radio, church newsletters and businesses) to advertise the community's value, available services and annual neighborhood events.

- *Encourage inserts in neighborhood newsletters twice a year as a community service.*



*Neighbors gathered at a celebration
Photo by Stan Waghalter*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Realtors, Religious institutions – bulletins/newsletters, Area businesses – posters, especially grocery stores, Advertising newspapers serving the Near NW community, NAs

Funding Sources: Discounted prices from area printers, Community calendars – area newspapers

- 3.5.2** Publicly recognize Near NW individuals, businesses, civic organizations or churches that have worked to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood and environment.

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: Homeowners, Businesses, Religious institutions, Express News, Area home improvement centers, Hardware stores, Nurseries, Neighborhood Resource Center

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Near Northwest Community Plan

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: NAs, Homeowners, Businesses, Religious institutions, Express News, Area home improvement centers, Hardware stores, Nurseries

Funding Sources: Fundraisers

3.5.3 Continue to hold Home Tours.

- *Expand the existing tour or offer additional tours for realtors.*
- *Use the realtor tour to show both residential and commercial properties.*
- *Create a “night tour” in the Inspiration Hills area.*



Monticello Park Historic District